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TO MY FRIEND,

DAVID A. MUNRO.

"SLAINTE MHATH"

THE CAPTURED CUNARDER

I

IT was the night of an Irish debate in the House of Commons, and among the listeners in the Strangers' Gallery, who were twisting themselves this way and that to catch a glimpse of the speakers — listeners mostly from the provinces, who willingly put up with the atmosphere of a common lodging-house for the sake of so unusual a treat — was a handsome man, who, dark naturally, had been tanned by exposure to tropic winds and suns to the complexion of a young and healthy Indian, brown

but not sallow, the full undercurrent of blood making itself visible like the glow of a ruby in his cheeks. Plainly from certain movements, as well as from the cut of his clothes, he was a seafaring man of some sort, though, unlike most seafaring men, who when ashore are very deliberate in their bearing, he had a quick intense way with him, particularly with his eyes, which were so sweeping and penetrating that anybody directly behind them might have been conscious of them, though their habit was to look directly ahead. Nothing was unobserved by him, nothing unheard. But the fault of so much intelligence was that his mobile face had no capacity for the concealment of feeling; approval or disappro-

val was at once recorded on it for all the world to mark.

The home-rule members were up in arms, and no dictionary in the world could show more synonymes of "vileness" than the member for Castle Magillicuddy had found to "hurl" (his own word) at the gentlemen on the Opposition benches.

The division bell rang sharply in the lobbies, on the terrace, in the corridors, and in the dining-room; and members scurried — without regard to convenience, to dinners, and conversations just begun — to be counted with their respective parties.

The government was defeated on the division, and the young man in the gallery, who had been listening with much greater interest than

those around him, rose with a petulant shrug, and passing down the winding stairs, at the foot of which a policeman towered over a rank of candidates for vacant places, soon found himself in the brilliantly lighted Palace Yard.

The beauty of the scene here held him for a moment; but he could not feel that it was in any part his. What had he just heard, just witnessed, in the House? The heel of the Englishman on the necks of his down-trodden compatriots; arrogance and contempt in reply to that eloquence from the member for Castle Magillicuddy, — Castle Magillicuddy, the very place of his birth, the prettiest spot in all Kerry.

He was not of the brooding

kind, however; it was seldom, in an adventurous life full of vicissitude, that he had been able to stay, or turn off, a gayety which played in him like a fountain, and burst out with all the more vigor after a stoppage. Hopeless it might be for Ireland in *there*, but things would be evened yet. He had a plan of his own to bring about a reckoning, — an original plan, as audacious as it was original.

Chuckling as he thought of it, he reached the Embankment, and walked leisurely towards Hungerford Bridge, stopping now and then to lean with his arms against the stone wall, over which he could look up and down the river.

There was nothing suspicious about him, and he was unobserved.

Had he been obliged to submit to an inquisition he could have given a very satisfactory account of himself, with ample opportunities for verification. He was Felix O'Grady, mariner, aged thirty-four, captain of the screw-steamer *Rosario*, 1 100 tons net register, then lying in the Waterloo Dock, Liverpool, and shipping part of an armament for a fast cruiser which the Argentine Republic had recently built.

A young man for such a post? That is explained by the fact that the *Rosario* was only a tramp steamer; though it should be added that O'Grady was qualified by natural abilities and experience to command a better ship. He had been a junior officer in the Cunard service before he got his master's

certificate, but he had lost his berth there through his too rampant Fenianism and, though to admit it is uncharitable, a tendency to drink.

His present visit to London, in answer to a summons of the consul-general, was to end the following day, and he expected to sail for Buenos Ayres within two weeks.

He turned from the river to look through his cigar smoke at the passing crowd, the girls with their sweethearts, the girls seeking companions, the loafers with their pipes, and the hurried little clerks with ruffled silk hats and glazed leather bags, who are present in nearly every London scene; and the prospect of finding any friend in the crowd was so little within the bounds of chance that when a familiar face

appeared it seemed to be part of a reverie rather than substance. But substance it was, corroborated by moonlight and lamp-light,—the face of an old companion and shipmate, Domenick Quinn, who when last heard of had been a gunner in the United States navy. He was dressed like a sailor ashore, — in a blue pilot-cloth suit, and a soft felt hat.

"Domenick, old man!"

Domenick did not seem to have the nerve of a gunner as the hand of his friend fell on his shoulder. He made a dive forward, as if to escape; and then recognizing O'Grady, whispered, in a shaken voice: "'S-s-sh! Come over here," dragging O'Grady across the way, where the shadows were deeper.

"What 's the matter with you,

Domenick? And I 've not seen you these five years," said O'Grady.

Domenick showed no immediate signs of rejoicing at the occasion, but looking quickly before and behind, compelled his friend by an interlocked arm to follow him. "Don't stand still, and don't talk as if you were sp'aking to a multitude," he said. "I 'm engaged on important business."

"Business? And what business is that?"

Domenick moved a square brown-paper parcel he was carrying from one arm to the other and glanced at it curiously.

"Business," he repeated.

"And what 's that you 've got there, Domenick, that seems to make you so un'asy?"

"'T is a musical box, that is," replied Domenick, again shifting the package.

"A musical box! And how many tunes will it play?"

"It will play the 'Wearin' of the Green,' for instance."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, indeed! 'T is a great instrument for patriotic airs. It plays 'Let Erin remember the days of owld.'"

O'Grady laughed; he understood now. "And what are you going to do with it?" he inquired, and chuckled.

"It 's a present I 'm taking over there" (nodding at the Houses of Parliament) — "a present from owld Ireland to Salisbury and Balfour."

"Let me feel the heft of it."

Domenick reluctantly surrendered the dangerous package and all its pleasing potentialities.

"Give it back to me, O'Grady," he said.

But O'Grady did not heed, and again crossed the roadway to the wall of the Embankment, his friend following unwillingly, as he did not like either the crowd or the lights. "Give it back to me," Domenick muttered, with an oath.

"That 's all right, Domenick. It 's safer for you, old man, when it 's with me. You were always a musician. Well do I remember how you used to warble the ballads for us in the old times! And have you seen Maggie Burke lately? And when did you come over?

And how 's her father? Oh, Domenick, have a smoke, owld man, and tell me about New York."

Domenick's face was not a pleasant one. He had the heavy jaw and elongated upper lip of tenacious purpose, eyes in narrow slits, a blunt nose, a low forehead, a smoky complexion. He was uneasy, but, subject to the quiet magnetism of O'Grady, he lighted the cigar that was offered, and leaned his shoulders and elbows against the Embankment wall, facing the passers-by.

O'Grady diverted him, and led him away from himself by talk of the ship in which he had come over, and of various acquaintances in New York, especially of Maggie Burke and her friends.

"Did you not hear that her father had been appointed Street Commissioner?" Quinn asked.

"Not a word. Is it Street Commissioner he is? That's the softest thing of all, is it not?"

"It is that."

O'Grady sighed. He had had tender experiences with Maggie Burke.

"She's in Europe now," Quinn added, "and —"

There was a soft splash in the river, — the brown paper parcel had slipped out of O'Grady's arm and floated off with the tide.

Domenick swore; but the culprit showed no concern; he irritated his friend still more by laughing.

"Curse you, O'Grady! You did that on purpose."

"And what if I did? 'T was only a musical box, you said."

"Oh, but what will I say to Cronin and the Executive Committee?"

"I 'll fix that for you. See here, now, — jump into this cab, and go along with me."

A hansom at O'Grady's signal had pulled up at the curb, and Domenick, obedient to any suggestion, as before, entered it. The address given to the driver was a lodging-house near Euston Square. As soon as they had started, O'Grady became serious.

"Don't speak of musical boxes," he said. "Come to Liverpool with me to-morrow. I 've got a job for you. A gunner? Sure, you 're the very man we want. There 's to be

a meeting of the Council in Liverpool to-morrow night. Cronin and all the boys will be there. I 'll make it all right with them, never fear. Musical boxes! Oh, but they are foolish things to play with. Maybe you set them for a good old Irish tune, and what is it you have? — 'Rule, Britannia,' or 'God Save the Queen?' And when you think they 're going so nicely, where do you find yourself? Well, just think of Martin Shea boxed up in Portland Prison this very night, — another martyr to the cause!"

Meanwhile the brown-paper parcel was being carried seaward by the tide without sinking, touching this object and that as harmlessly as a bit of drift-wood or a cork. It bumped against one of the piers of

London Bridge, and then floated in among the channel steamers moored alongside St. Katherine's Wharf, lingering under their paddle-wheels and propellers. Then it grounded in the black noxious mud of Limehouse, and remained there till the swash of a passing tug-boat set it free to continue its journey down the river, drifting from one bank to the other, and dancing in the swell of the passing vessels, then creeping, half-submerged, in the middle of the stream. Such is the march of Death, — near us when we know it not, turning aside when it would be so easy to strike us. But for all its soaking the brown-paper parcel preserved its capacity for fatal mischief. As the dawn crept over the Essex marshes below Woolwich all

who were out-of-doors in the raw spectral mist heard a loud explosion, and those who were anywhere near the bank of the river saw a mass of splintered wood thrown high into the air. An old hulk beached in the mud had been blown up, — how or by whom was not known, and the police investigation discovered nothing.

II

THE next evening a secret meeting was held in the back parlor of a house in the north end of Liverpool, when Captain Felix O'Grady explained to a dozen men present the scheme he had mentioned to Domenick Quinn.

"Is n't it good enough for you, gentlemen? Could you have anything better? Tell me if any of you have a prettier device for striking at the enemy!" he cried, as the drinks were tossed off and rapidly replenished.

He was flushed and excited,—even eloquent as he went into the details; all of the twelve men pres-

ent were with him as to the main features of the plan, except Cronin, of whom Domenick had spoken the evening before. Cronin was not satisfied, and was disposed to oppose the plan. He was a gross, oily man of the "heeler" type, bulky of frame, with a husky, grumbling voice, a solitaire diamond pin fixed to a shirt front of unusual amplitude, and fingers so fat that the rings hooping them gave them the grooved appearance of a corkscrew.

"It would have been better to have let Domenick Quinn do what the committee instructed him to do and sent him over here to do. That's the only way you'll ever get satisfaction for Ireland, now mind me," he said, with a husky

brogue. "And there will be trouble when the Executive Committee hears of your interference, O'Grady. 'T is not ten days ago that we had a meeting in Brooklyn, and every man there was in favor of extreme measures."

"And is n't my measure extreme, Alderman? Just listen to him, boys! I don't believe, and I never did believe, in dynamite. 'T is like hitting out at random in a crowd with your eyes shut, and you 're just as likely to knock off the head of your friend as the head of your enemy. Don't strike, I say, till you 're sure 't is a damned Englishman, and not your uncle or your grandfather, that 's going to tumble."

"Dynamite scares them devils,

anyway; as for constitutional agitation — "

"I don't put faith in it myself," replied O'Grady. "There 's not much that 's constitutional in what I 'm after, is there?" he added, with a laugh.

"Well, go over your scheme once more," said Cronin, who held the purse-strings of the secret society to which all who were there belonged. And with great gusto and vivacity O'Grady once more divulged the plan by which he declared he could do more mischief to the merchant shipping of England than the *Alabama* had done to that of the United States.

The reader must remember that the *Rosario* was a steamer of 1100 tons, then taking on board a part

of the armament for a new Argentine cruiser, including four seven-inch quick-firing Armstrongs and eight four-pounder quick-firing Hotchkiss guns. She had not yet shipped her crew, and O'Grady meant that there should not be a man on board her who was not known to him and sworn to the society then in conclave. Two mates and two engineers he was already provided with, all of them trustworthy, and from the forecastle to the stoke-hole and the stoke-hole to the cabin, there was not to be a hand whose allegiance could not be counted on. There were also to be half a dozen passengers including Domenick Quinn; and though these would appear as citizens of the United States in the

ship's papers, they would all speak with a brogue and be in league with the captain and the crew.

The ship would be cleared without suspicion or difficulty, and would take her departure from the Mersey for Buenos Ayres, — ostensibly for Buenos Ayres, though O'Grady had no intention of navigating her to that port. As soon as she was out of the Channel and out of sight of land her course would be changed, and then she would lay to. The rapid-fire breech-loaders would be brought out of the hold and mounted on the deck. Domenick and the others in the cabin would cease to be passengers, and come out as members of the ship's company.

If, meanwhile, any vessel happened to sight her and inquire why

she was lying to, she would signal, "Engines temporarily out of order; am making repairs; need no assistance." Again under way, she would be navigated to a position west of Fastnet, and there again be hove to in wait for the new Cunarder *Grampania*, which would sail from Liverpool three days after her. The *Grampania* was to be her prey: she was to be captured. All the armament intended for the Argentine cruiser was to be transferred to her, or as much of it as she could carry. Her captain, crew, and passengers were to be put aboard the *Rosario* and carried back to Liverpool, while the *Grampania*, a Cunarder no more, but a privateer flying the green flag, was to sweep the North Atlantic. As far as speed was concerned

there was nothing she could not overhaul, for on her trial trip she had easily made twenty-three knots an hour over the measured mile in the Clyde.

But how was a "tramp" like the *Rosario*, which could not show more than twelve knots, to intercept so fast a ship? That was a matter simple enough. Hove to on the westward-bound track of the Cunard steamers, the *Rosario* would signal as soon as the *Grampania* sighted her, which she was bound to do,—"Shaft broken; I am sinking," and the Cunard captain would immediately approach her closely to send off boats and facilitate communication. Then O'Grady would fire a shot across the big ship's bows, and at the same time haul

up the green flag and demand her surrender.

"I 'd give tin dollars to see owld Gallup's face when you do that," said one of the men present, referring to the captain of the *Grampania*. "He 'll be that mad he 'll turn ahead full speed and try to run you down."

"Never fear, I 'll be ready for him. I 've no love for Gallup," said O'Grady. "'T was he that reported me for speaking at that Fenian meeting ten years ago. Some of our boys will be on the *Grampania*, — some in the fo'c's'le, and some in the stoke-hole," he continued, "and they 'll be on the lookout for us. There 'll be enough of them to take care of Gallup and the officers. Ay, before he knows it Gallup and

all the rest, every mother's son of them, except our boys, will be on board the *Rosario* with their noses pointed at Cape Clear. How will the *Grampania* do for an armed cruiser then, with those breech-loaders on watch along the deck and myself on the bridge? — an Admiral, but no cocked hat, and devil a bit of pride in me that I 'd be bold enough to spake of."

An innocent and contagious peal of laughter burst from O'Grady, so spontaneous and so joyous that it was convincing as to the humor with which he regarded the situation and all its contingencies.

"You 're always thinking about yourself, O'Grady," growled Cronin.

"About myself, is it? About myself? Not that at all. What

would I be here for? What would I be losing my post and my character for but for Ireland, — God bless her!"

He was entirely sincere in this; he was uncorrupted by any thought of self in the outcome of his conspiracy.

Cronin's wide mouth worked spasmodically on his soggy cigar, rolling it from corner to corner and tilting it up and down, as though, instead of smoking it, he meant to eat it. His bleary eyes were screwed up as he critically turned them from O'Grady to Quinn and the others, who were more inclined than he was to accept the plan at once.

"The schame's not bad, I'll own," he conceded; "but I'd like to ask you a few questions, for you never

had much sinse, O'Grady. When you 've got the *Grampania*, if you do capture her, what then?"

"Then I mean to cruise northward and southward over the eastward and westward transatlantic tracks."

O'Grady brought out of his pocket a small chart of the Atlantic, and a list of sailings of the various lines from New York and Liverpool and Glasgow, and showed how to almost a certainty he could intercept all the great ships which would start from both sides the week after the *Grampania*,—White Star ships, Cunard ships, National ships, and Anchor Line ships, as well as the *Grampania's* new sister.

"And what will you do with them?"

"It will take a deep-sea exploring expedition to find them when I 've done with them."

"Scuttle them or blow them up?" a voice inquired.

"Dynamite will be convenient," said Cronin.

"That 's but a trifling daytail that we can settle after," replied O'Grady.

"And what will you do with the passengers and crew?" inquired Madden, another of the company.

"The passengers and crew of the *Grampania*, as I 've told you, will go back to Queenstown in the *Rosario*. Those on the next ship we capture we 'll transfer to some sailing-ship, or an owld tramp that is n't worth sinking,—there 's plenty of them. And so on. It 's all aisy enough, trust me for that."

"You 'll need to be careful of our own people," said Madden; "there 'll be plenty of them in the steerage and second cabin."

"I 'll be as tinder as a father to them."

"Now don't be too aisy with any damned Englishman! Make it as hot as blazes for every wan av thim."

"They 'll wish they never heard of Kilmainham before I 'm through with some of them."

"And the spayshee? What about the spayshee?" Cronin demanded.

"The specie, is it?" replied O'Grady. "See here now, Cronin; do you take me for a thief that would hold up a train for what might be in the safe? The specie

will have to go to the bottom with the ships. I would n't touch a cent of it."

This was said with a splendid conviction of probity, though it ignored the fact that sending the captured treasure to the bottom would be quite as irreparable a wrong to the owners as a theft. It did not satisfy Cronin, who bit his cigar in two in the painful abstraction caused by the thought of "boodle" lost to a world in which good liquor costs much, and the sporting proclivities of a city father cannot be gratified without additions to the allowances of small-minded tax-payers.

"It 's a fayasco you 'll be making; I 'll not vote a cent for it," he declared, "nor take a hand in it."

O'Grady was discouraged for a moment; but he had won the others, and seeing this, Cronin did not persist in his opposition, though he had another point to make in his cross-examination.

"Maybe there 's a trifle that you fellows have never thought of. What are you going to do about coal? The *Grampania* won't have more than will stand her for seven days, and of that two days' supply will be spent before you meet her."

"Give me five days on the *Grampania* and it 's all I ask. I 'll not sweep the seas clean — I never intended that — but what I 'll do will be the greatest thing for Ireland yet."

And it was true, as he pointed out, that, barring fogs, an armed

cruiser of the speed of the *Grampania*, cruising northward and southward across the tracks of the transatlantic steamers, could within five days waylay and capture, destroying if she choose, some if not all of the fleetest and newest ships of the Liverpool lines.

The smoke muffled the company in its gray and blue wreaths until Alderman Cronin's diamonds could only blink like sparks of tobacco. O'Grady's scheme was sanctioned, and he went down to the docks that night and slept on board the *Rosario*, happy in visions of a retaliation more effective than any his countrymen had yet thought of.

Two weeks later the *Rosario* left the Mersey on a midnight tide, and

in addition to an unusually large crew she carried many passengers, some of whom had come on board without tickets at the moment her hawsers were slipped in the Sandon dock. This was on a Wednesday, and the *Grampania* was scheduled to sail the following Saturday.

III

AS usual, the *Grampania* called for the mails at Queenstown on Sunday, and at about two in the afternoon she slipped by Roche's Point and turned ahead full speed for New York. Full speed with her implied a velocity unprecedented on the sea. Her twin screws made the water in her wake boil like the rapids of Niagara, and with each throb of her tremendous engines she reached ahead like a large projectile from a mortar; other ships were fast, but they seemed at anchor as she overhauled them and lost them astern. As she flew along the coast the passengers, who

knew the headlands with the gray old towers and the spaces of yellow green flax, thought these capes had come closer together than they were before, so much did she lessen the time between them. Hardly had the Old Head of Kinsale been passed than Brow Head loomed up abeam, and long before sunset the pillar of Fastnet appeared as a faint gray streak on a pearly sky upon the starboard quarter. By noon on Monday she had logged five hundred knots, and she had settled down, as the chief engineer said, to "a gait of twenty-one knots."

"Ay, but she 's a gran' sheep," he declared. "I 'll no be a beet surprised if we put ye ashore by Friday morning. I didna expect it, either. We 've got a lot o' them

Irish in the stoke-hole, but they 're working like deevils. I dinna ken what 's the matter with them. It 's no grog; they 're unco' sober. Ay, and they 're singing, and that gay ye 'd think they were daft."

The captain also was in high spirits. After dinner he seated himself within a group of pretty girls on the upper deck, and gave chaffing answers to the questions they put to him as an oracle possessing the key to all mysteries.

"How much horse-power has she, captain?" one of them asked him.

"About a hundred thousand donkey-power," he said, gravely.

"My! I should think she'd blow up!"

"Oh, that would n't matter! All the decks are fitted in vertical

grooves and supplied with air-chambers, so that in event of an explosion they would rise completely out of the hull and float in the air like the air-ships you read about. The motion is said to be delightful, — far superior to that of a balloon."

They searched his face, but it was quite serious.

"Really!" they chorused.

"Really. And another interesting thing is that we burn so much coal that all the cargo we can carry is fodder for the donkeys. That's the difficulty with us, don't you know."

It was an evening of exquisite beauty. The sea was still but for the waves of displacement, which, like the wings of an arrow, spread

in oblique folds from the bow. A dull gold moon was climbing out of the sea into a clear violet sky, while the dying fires of the sunset were still glowing in the west, and gilding cloud-made mountains and lagoons. The well-content passengers, laughing and chattering, filled the deck, and gave it all the animation of a city street.

A steamer on the port bow was reported.

"Ay, ay."

One of the junior officers came down from the bridge to report it to the captain, and the passengers excitedly ran to the rail and searched the horizon. Only the keenest eyes, helped by the most powerful glasses, could see the faint line of a topmast pencilled

some ten miles to the westward. The captain did not leave the girls, though they were anxious to drag him out of his chair to see the coming ship.

"Sit down, and I'll tell you about the biggest wave I ever saw. It was in the Gulf of Pe-Chee-Lee. I was a midshipman then, in a clipper belonging to —"

The junior officer came down again. "She's hove to, sir," he said.

"What do you make her out to be?"

"She's about twelve hundred tons, sir; brig-rigged; low in the water. Looks too smart for a tramp, sir; has a black funnel with a green band, but we can't make out her signals yet."

The captain went with the junior to the bridge, and in less than half an hour the *Grampania* was within hailing distance of the stranger.

SHE WAS THE *ROSARIO*, CAPTAIN O'GRADY, BOUND FROM LIVERPOOL TO BUENOS AYRES.

Enough light was left in the sky to show that she was flying the Argentine flag. She was, she signalled, disabled, and making water fast.

"Lower a boat and go on board, and see for yourself how she is, Mr. Bishop," said Captain Gallup to the chief officer.

Night had closed in, but the decks were now fuller of bustle than before. The *Grampania* stood up out of the calm sea gridironed with light like a town built in ter-

races on a cliff (like Dover, for instance, as one sees it in the belated boat from Calais) and as soon as she came to a standstill she lay in a lake of white froth of her own churning, and the escaping steam roared out of her pipes like the breath of a newly awakened volcano. Quartermasters ran up and down along the deck; the bosun's whistle pierced the greater din with its shrillness like the voice of an uncanny bird whirling overhead. On the port side the passengers and crew hung over the rails of the three tiers of decks, and the ship, big as she was, listed under their weight. The captain fumed and fretted on the bridge. He was a kindly, humane man, but to be hove to on account of a sand-barge

like that, to be delayed several hours, and to lose the prospect of a new record, — it was a situation calling not for language, but brimstone. They saw the boat lowered, with the chief officer in the sternsheets, and pull away for the *Rosario*, heaving gently on the swell, her course indicated by a lamp hung in the bow. Farther away another light pricked the darkness, and they knew it was hung over the side of the *Rosario* to show where the gangway was. Then came twenty lingering minutes of suspense and impatience, with a double measure of duration in which watches seemed to stop and the ship's bells to be suspended from their customary chronicles.

"She's coming back now, sir," said

the third officer to the captain, — the "extra third," for the *Grampania* had a double set of officers as well as double engines.

"Coming back! What's he been loafing so long for? I tell you, the ships have improved in my time, but I'll be hanged if the young fellows in the service have."

He impatiently shoved the arm of the telegraph over until the indicator stood opposite the sector marked "Stand by," and the chief engineer himself sent the reply to show that the order had been received.

The boat was now close alongside, and instead of the crew of ten with which she had started, twenty men or more climbed like monkeys up the ladder which hung down

the port side of the *Grampania*. The officer who stood at the gangway thought some of the faces were unfamiliar, though he saw two or three others — not more — of the crew, and Mr. Bishop had not come back.

"Who are these fellows? Where is the chief officer?" he demanded.

"He stayed aboard the other ship. These fellows belong to her."

This was said, without any of the usual marks of respect, by one of the seamen, who pushed the angry officer aside, and disappeared in the crowd on deck.

Meanwhile another boat from the *Rosario*, unlighted and unobserved, had come up to the *Grampania* on the starboard side, which was deserted. Quietly and quickly

another ladder was lowered for her by two fo'c's'le hands who were in the plot, and fully thirty men swarmed on board, with Domenick Quinn at the head of them. An order was whispered among them, and they vanished in the blur of shadow and confusing patches of illumination forward. They were re-enforced immediately by a third boat, which, like the second, crept alongside without attracting attention.

The captain had lost all patience. He knew the *Grampania's* boat had returned, but no one came to report to him, till he sent a quartermaster for the officer stationed at the gangway.

"Let his boat come back without him? Sent no report? Staying

on board the other ship? The man must be mad! Blow the whistle there three times, and see if you can hail them. Confound him! I 've a good mind to leave him there. Forty minutes gone, — fourteen knots out of the run! Great heavens! what *are* we? Are we a bumboat, or a missionary schooner, or a steam-lighter, or a Hoboken ferry-boat? Here you, Mr. Ruddock, take the boat off again and bring some satisfactory information. I 'll be —"

He could not finish; he was interrupted by a seizure which took his speech and breath away, and left him dazed as by a stroke of apoplexy. The impossible had happened; the unimaginable thing had come to pass. A strong arm was drawn about his neck, like a rope,

and his arm and legs were no longer free. He struggled, and attempted to raise his voice, but he was powerless, — as powerless as he would have been from amazement had he been ungagged and unfettered.

"Now you 'll go and get some information yourself, old Blowhard," a venomous and appalling voice whispered in his ear; "but I don't believe you 'll find it satisfactory. Don't be afraid, though. No harm will come to you if you behave like a gentleman."

Afraid! The commander of the *Grampania*, an Englishman, an officer, and a gentleman, afraid on the bridge of his own ship! He made a mad effort to release himself and take satisfaction for the

insult, but it was unavailing. He was quickly lowered, at the end of a signal halyard, from the bridge to one of the boats alongside, for conveyance to the *Rosario.*

There was not an officer of the *Grampania* who had not been similarly surprised and made captive by the boarders; all of the navigators were crowded into the mess-room, under a heavily armed guard, while the engineers were hustled out of their berths (those who had been off duty) and out of the engine-room, into the steerage hospital, at the door of which Domenick Quinn placed two of his men, with orders to shoot down any one attempting to escape.

As O'Grady had predicted — as it is but fair to say he hoped — no

bloodshed was necessary, however. (Revolutionists are seldom bloodthirsty at heart.) The surprise paralyzed the whole ship, arrested all independence of action, and turned men who had been resolute and intelligent into an attitude of benumbed docility. Any reasonable contingency they might have risen to and circumvented, — the accidents of fog, collision, overwhelming seas, — but they could not comprehend, much less grapple with, what had befallen them, it seemed so unreal, so impossible.

The news, reaching the passengers slowly and through conflicting rumors and surmises, was treated at first with incredulity and scoffing merriment, and then, as it was confirmed piecemeal, with indignation,

alarm, and hysteria. But for an account of how they fared we can quote from a *Herald* reporter's interview with Mr. Alonzo Butts, the buyer for a dry-goods house in Walker Street.

"Well, sir, I had just lighted my second cigar after getting on the outside of a small and elegant dinner, and was whooping up the boys for an auction pool, when the *Rosario* was first sighted. Oysters? Never eat oysters after the second day out. Soup? Clear green turtle. Fish? Not much! A saddle? You bet! and one of them Scotch grouse! Ain't they elegant? Well, sir, when they reported her the fellows ran out of the smoking-room to see her, and when it was said that she was disabled, I put my nose out for a

minute, just to get a smell of her. But I 'm no yearling, and a ship at sea is no more novelty to me than a bobtail car. I 've been crossing the pond and spreading myself over two continents these twenty years, and have had some tough times, too. I was in the *Batavia* that time she broke her shaft and was towed into the Azores, and we was n't heard of for six weeks. I looked round and spoke to an old Liverpool Jack, and I could see that it was going to be an all-night job bringing the crew of the *Rosario* aboard the *Grampania*, for the old salt told me that this was what they were going to do. The smoking-room was empty; so I just went and did what I always do when I 'm lonesome, — I curled myself up in a

corner of the sofa, and slept the sleep of the innocent, the just, and the beautiful. I guess it must have been about half-past nine when I woke. The steward was shaking me, as pale as a ghost.

"'Wake hup, sir! wake hup!' says he. 'There's a mutiny! They 'av' chucked the capt'in overboard, and they say as the chieft officer's murdered. Wake hup, sir.'

"'Don't be a derned fool,' says I. 'Mutiny, eh? Well, when there's fun of that sort goin' on I'm in for it every time. Mutiny? I'm a free and enlightened American citizen; but when there's talk of mutiny I am a born despot, with myself on the throne, as often as your Waterbury ticks, and don't you forget it!'

"I was madder than all Bloomingdale, — that steward was such a chump, — and I wrestled myself together and went on deck, feeling all the while that there was thunder in the air.

"'Hello, commodore!' says I to the old salt I've spoken of. 'There's a born idiot in the smoking-room who says the Statue of Liberty has come down from her perch and there's piracy on the high seas. Have a smoke, mariner?'

"Well, I have my sensibilities just as much as any of the Four Hundred, and when that ancient sea-dog put his forearm against my neck, and yelled out, 'Here, Pat, is a duffer you've lost sight of,' and I was hustled down the companion-

way into the saloon, — well, I was hurt and crushed, and ready to take a long farewell to all my glory.

"The saloon was just like it is when there's to be a concert for the Seaman's Orphanage, — every seat filled, everybody sittin' there like children in a Sunday-school, all feeling very good and rather depressed. But standing at the four doors there was, instead of a lot of gaping stewards, as tough a gang as ever I saw, all armed with revolvers, and all of them with eyes right round their heads, like a guard at Sing Sing. A youngish good-looking fellow then jumps up — I had n't seen him come in — and makes a speech with a brogue as soft as a feather-bed.

"'T is the fortunes of war and

not myself that 's to blame for all the inconvenience I 'm causin' you, ladies and gentlemen; but 't is only inconvenience and not sufferin' that will come out of it, provided you trust yourselves to me, and when you 've had a day or two to consider the matter, as you will before you get to Queenstown, you 'll own — generous in your feelings as I can see you all are — that you 're glad to have done this thing for poor old Ireland. 'T is myself that would like to go back to Queenstown with you, and see you safe there, but I 'm wanted here more than there, and I 'll have to trust you to Captain Gallup. The *Rosario* is well found, and a comfortable little ship, and if you 're not treated as well as I 'd treat you myself, all you 've got to

do is to send a letter to me on board the *Grampania* at any time.'"

Beyond this point it is not necessary to follow the narrative of Mr. Butts. All night long boats were passing between the two ships, which rose and fell as if breathing on the gentle swell. A full moon gave day to the sea. The armament originally intended for Argentina, or as much of it as had been picked out as being desirable for its new purpose, was trans-shipped to the *Grampania* on her own tubular life-rafts, which by their buoyancy, stability, and spaciousness made the work, carried on as it was in a calm sea, far from difficult. No attempt was made to transfer the passengers and men until sunrise, and then it took less than four hours; for the

prisoners were not only made to row themselves, but those who were able to handle an oar were pressed into service, under armed guards, to expedite the abandonment of the *Grampania* by those who properly belonged to her, making trip after trip with boat-loads of passengers.

By noon O'Grady was able to muster his forces. He had brought 175 men with him from the *Rosario*, and had added to this number sixty more of his own countrymen, chiefly firemen and stokers, who had, either by prearrangement or subsequent persuasion, deserted the crew of the *Grampania*. That ship's complement was over four hundred, but it was by no means essential to have that number to work her as an

armed cruiser, for it included over one hundred cooks and stewards and deck hands, whose business it was to attend to the passengers. About one hundred and sixty men would be needed in the engine-room, worked in three watches, but she could do with fewer by lying to now and then. O'Grady had misgivings that lasted as long as a breath on a window-pane. He glanced along the deck. Already Domenick Quinn had mounted the rapid-fire guns in their sockets, and they were glittering in the sunshine like forked lightning.

"Stand by the flag!" O'Grady cried. A moment afterwards he blew a whistle, and a green banner with a golden harp upon it streamed from the flag-staff astern, saluted in

the solitude of the ocean by three blasts from the *Grampania's* fog-horn and the cheers of her new crew.

Captain Gallup was a witness on the bridge of the *Rosario*. No oath he knew was fit for the occasion. The flag was dipped to him in mockery, and then the *Grampania* slowly drew away, and in half an hour she had melted out of sight as though she and all that had happened had been of no more substance than a dream.

IV

THE news came almost at the same moment (about four in the afternoon in Washington and nine at London) to a cabinet minister dining some important government members of the House of Commons; to the Secretary of the Navy as he glumly turned over documents which proved that three new cruisers intended to beat everything afloat were top-heavy in a moderate gale, and that it took three hours to fire one of their guns; and to the President himself entertaining unceremoniously some friends who had been familiar in days when it seemed as likely that he would be

Shah of Persia as incumbent of his present office. But as it was in an evening paper, it was either laughed at or not considered at all.

Journalism is the real cause of modern pessimism and unbelief. But in this instance the evening paper, without premeditation and without prejudice to its habit, had struck a "sensation" which the slower mediums of official communication could not allay or dispel. Each despatch pulsing under the Atlantic was but a new and more active excitant. The *Rosario had* been sighted off Brow Head, and Mr. Bishop *had* come ashore at Crookhaven with the news, which was verified, to the amazement and dismay of two continents.

An embargo was at once placed

on all ships flying the English flag which had been ready to sail either to or from American ports. But those that were already on the ocean and could not be intercepted, — what of them and their passengers? Small comfort was to be had in the probability that some would escape; some also must fall into the hands of the pirates, and there was no surmise, however imaginative, that did not become a possibility. The passengers might be cast adrift on the ocean in open boats, and were an attempt made to land them in some other way, who could tell the privation and indignities they would have to suffer? There was nothing consoling in the triumphant boast of some of the Irish organs that Erin's day of reckoning

had come at last, in face of the declarations of other organs of the same bias that the *Grampania* had not been captured by Irishmen at all, but by hirelings of the Conservatives bent on working mischief to the cause of home-rule.

The steamers due to arrive were anxiously watched for, and underwriters raised their premiums hour by hour. At Fire Island and Sandy Hook every puff of smoke shading the sky and creeping up the horizon drew upon itself a sheaf of telescopes, and a flotilla of tugboats doing service as scouts ran out to investigate. A Red Star Line steamer, a French liner, and one of the emigrant boats of the Hamburg-American Line came in on time, and reported that they had

seen nothing of the *Grampania*. Following them a White Star ship was due, but the day passed and she failed to arrive. When thirty-six hours left her still unreported, the surmise that she had been captured solidified itself into belief.

Despatches were rapidly exchanged between the Foreign Office in London and the State Department at Washington, and within two days of the arrival of the *Rosario* off Brow Head the new cruiser *Columbia*, her row of funnels belching smoke, passed through the Narrows of New York Harbor and out to sea in search of the marauders, the British cruiser *Blake* having in the meanwhile been despatched on the same errand from Halifax.

The *Blake* was no longer the flag-ship, and was commanded by Captain Mortimer Meredith, whose sobriquet in the service, derived from his humorous habit, was "Very Merry." A fellow must be humorous or he would never think of going to sea, he said, and the present expedition fell in with his disposition to regard everything as a joke and a source of amusement.

"There 's blood on the moon," he said to his executive officers standing with him on the bridge, "and when we 've sunk the *Grampania*, what next? We 'll put an end to the *Flying Dutchman*. Strategy is the word, my boy. Strategy, *strategy*, my grandmother said to me, when I spoke about the coquetry of a girl she did n't like."

V

THE *Blake* was by this time well to the eastward of the Banks, and her engines were slowed down to less than fourteen knots. The *Grampania* might be found anywhere, but counting the chances Captain Meredith made up his mind that she was to be looked for to the westward of the point where she and the *Rosario* had separated.

After slowing down, he took a zigzag course, steering now southeast and then northeast, so as to alternately touch the eastward and westward routes of the regular lines. Then he turned the ship round and repeated the zigzagging

manœuvre, now leading northwest, then southwest.

She was going along in this way in a moderate sea, which gave her a slight roll, when soon after midnight a light was reported on the port bow. The stars were dimmed by a little haze, and the moisture glistened on the deck and its fixtures wherever a lamp threw a ray, but it was possible to see eight or nine miles. This would not be the first ship the *Blake* had spoken since leaving Halifax. She had met several sailing-ships and four small steamers, one of the latter reporting that two days earlier a very large and fast steamer had borne down upon her from the northeast, departing suddenly after coming within hailing distance.

That episode could be accounted for by the small value of the rusty little "tramp" that reported it. O'Grady of course disdained such quarry; no gallant highwayman would stoop to rob a tinker when on the same heath post-chaises were moving.

The white mast-head light visible over the port bow of the *Blake*, flickering, fitful, dim, when first seen, rapidly became definite, steady, brilliant, and it was soon supplemented by the red port light of the approaching ship, which evidently was travelling very fast.

Captain Meredith kept his watch in his hand, timing her to judge her rate of speed. He did not change his course, for as both vessels were now steering they would

when abeam be not more than a mile apart, — probably less than half of that. A smile of satisfaction showed in his face as he bent his head over the luminous bowl of the compass.

"Now if it is the *Grampania*, we 'll have some fun with her," he said to the executive officer. "This is my idea: if the ships were sailing on schedule time the White Star steamer *Gigantic* would be just about where we are now — I' ve figured it out carefully — and O'Grady will be on the lookout for her. A nice morsel for them she 'd be! Now we 'll masquerade as the *Gigantic*, — do you see? We 'll show the White Star signals, and draw the beggar on, and keep him near us till daybreak, and then

we'll let fly at him, and he'll find that he's got more than he can swallow. Eh? How does that strike you, my boy?"

It struck the captain himself very humorously, and the officers around him laughed with him at the idea, — not to have laughed would have been a subversion of discipline.

Just then the approaching ship brought her green starboard light in range, showing that she had changed her course as though to cross the *Blake's* bows, or to bring her nearer to that vessel.

"What's she doing? What's she doing? God bless us! Does the beggar want us to run him down?"

The two ships came precariously near.

"Now then for the signals," he said.

An officer blew a small silver whistle hanging from a button of his coat, and two green lights of dazzling brilliance flared up in the night with a strange theatric effect. The sea boiled and feathered around the ship in the ghastly radiance, and fragments of the fixtures on deck were protruded out of the darkness for an instant by the sudden illumination. But there was no signal from the other ship in response. She crossed the bows of the *Blake*, and then headed to the westward, evidently with the intention of keeping her company.

"She, too, is going to wait for daybreak," said Captain Meredith. "Well, we 'll keep her warm," he

added, as he went to the telegraph and set the speed at full.

The log indicated, an hour later, that his ship was making twenty knots; but the stranger held her own so far, and showed an equal speed. At six bells — still three hours from sunrise — she began to drop astern, however, almost imperceptibly.

"Getting a bit tired, eh?" said Captain Meredith. "Well, I won't be hard on you," and he put the speed at three-quarters.

A telltale flash and the report of a gun followed close upon his words, and fragments of shattered metal, rivet-heads, and splints of wire rigging fell in a shower on the heads of all who were on the bridge. A shot from the stranger had gone

through one of the funnels and cut in two one of the stays.

"The saucy varlet! That comes of being too soft-hearted!" said the captain, taking his cap off to rub a slight cut on his scalp caused by one of the fragments. "Did n't that strike you as being rather heavy for a seven-inch gun, Mr. Devereaux?" he asked his executive officer.

"Remarkably so, sir, — remarkably so," said the executive officer, tying his handkerchief over a cut on his wrist caused by another fragment.

"It must have been, though. She has nothing larger than a seven-inch gun, — four seven-inch and eight four-pounders, that was the report."

A lieutenant who had been sent to investigate the damage done returned with one of the gunners.

"Beg pard'n, sir, but that was n't no seven-inch gun," said the gunner.

"What was it, then. The *Grampania* has nothing else."

Another flash and a shriek in the upper air seemed to be meant for an answer.

The gunner ducked. "Blow me if that ain't a 10-inch rifle," he said, "and it was one of them that knocked the hole in the funnel!"

"Expects us to heave to, does he? He 'll be sorry in the morning!" the captain said, adding, to the executive officer, "Show him the White Star signals again."

The customary night signals of a White Star ship (two green lights)

were again burned, and, closely following them, another shot tore across the *Blake's* bows, without striking her, however.

"He 's sure we are the *Gigantic* now, and I don't like to undeceive him; but it is most exasperating to be peppered in this way, — most exasperating! Strategy is the word; but, Tomlinson, do you think you could touch him up a bit without doing much damage? The worm will turn, you know."

The captain rubbed his head again, and when he withdrew his hand it was moist with blood.

Tomlinson was the gunner. "Yes, sir," he replied, cheerily. "I think we could, — just nudge him, sir, to show him where our feet are, so as he won't tread on 'em, sir."

One of the smaller guns of the *Blake* was quickly manned, and a shot fired at the pursuing stranger as a gentle remonstrance. It was more provocative than a vehement protest would have been, and it at once drew on the *Blake* a succession of remarkably well aimed shots, one of which ploughed a furrow in the forward deck, while another went through a ventilator just aft of the bridge as though the metal had been sheet-glass.

"We must humor the beggar, I suppose," Captain Meredith now said, rather ruefully, and gave orders to slow down the engines and signal the other ship that he would heave to till morning. She appeared to be satisfied with this, and coming within a quarter of a

mile of the *Blake*, she also hove to, waiting for daylight.

Captain Meredith had his crew called to quarters, and did not leave the bridge all night. Every light observable on the other ship, every sign of life, was instantly reported to him, but his own scrutiny anticipated the information. The glass was never out of his hands, and seldom dropped below his eyes, which strove to pierce the darkness until they ached.

As the sun's approach was foretold by paling stars and a misty whiteness, the luminary was slow in answering the questions of the watchers, to whom its revelations came piecemeal and delayed.

"The *Grampania* has got a black hull, has she not, Mr. Devereaux?"

"Yes, sir."

"Curious. This seems to be gray."

"Effect of morning light, sir."

"No; it *is* gray. They must have repainted her. How many funnels has she?"

"Two, by rights, sir."

"I thought so. What do you mean by saying 'by rights'?"

"I believe I can make out three, sir."

"So there are! No, by Jove! there are four. Yes, four funnels and a gray hull! It is not the *Grampania* at all! What the deuce is it?"

An old quartermaster was standing by. "Ax pard'n, sir, but I know what that wessel is."

"Well, sir, what is she?"

"Ax pard'n, sir, but I don't like to say."

"Don't be an idiot! What is she?"

"Can't you see, sir? I was aboard that wessel in New York when I was on furlough, sir, at the navy-yard. Hit's the *Columbia*, sir."

It was indeed, the new United States cruiser *Columbia*, with four funnels and triple screws, which had been chasing the English ship without a suspicion of her character, and with a conviction that she was the Captured Cunarder.

VI

NEITHER the most peevish of old fo'c's'le Jacks nor the least responsible of boys could stand on the bridge of the *Grampania*, and observe her proportions and the completeness of her equipment without a thrill of pride. The funnels slope upward like two leaning towers, and have a circumference that would allow two railway trains to pass through either at once. The water-line is as far below as it would be from the cross-trees of an ordinary ship. The cro'nest for the lookout is a hundred feet high, and such are the luxuries, as well as the necessaries, provided, that a

steam-pipe is carried up to it to keep the feet of the watch warm in winter. Eight separate telegraphs stand in a row, and communicate not only with the engines and the steering-gear, but with capstans, windlasses, and deck machinery. To stand up here and be captain of it all! O'Grady never had harder work in his life to control his emotions than he did as he looked fore and aft along the splendid deck and gave the word to turn ahead full speed.

But hopeful as he was, he knew well enough that the work before him would not be easy. Some of the men were unruly and contumacious; he had to deal with them peremptorily, — to dispossess them of their personal arms, to attempt

to imbue them with a spirit of discipline. Some of his engineers were unfamiliar with twin-screw ships, and with many of the new inventions which were to be found all over the *Grampania;* it was necessary for them to proceed with caution to avoid errors, which, if once made, could hardly fail to be disastrous. Fortunately, however, one of them had been in the ship before her capture, and he was invaluable. Neither the fo'c's'le hands nor those in the stoke-hole and engine-room yet understood how simply patriotic the captain's intentions were, and the expectation of unlimited prize-money kept them in good spirits.

During the afternoon a large steamer was sighted to the north-

ward, and O'Grady at once gave chase to her. She surrendered easily, and proved to be a cattle-boat, the *Bulgaria*, bound from Liverpool to Boston. Her own crew was placed in confinement, and a prize-crew put on board, with orders to keep in company with the *Grampania*.

"Why not sink her? I don't know what you are thinking of!" Quinn complained to O'Grady.

"I keep my thoughts to myself, like a gentleman, and I'd thank you to keep that in mind, Domenick Quinn. But since you are an old friend, I'll tell you. I'm going to keep her by me as a tender, and when we catch a big ship we'll transfer the crew and passengers to her, and send her

off to Queenstown or to Halifax, so that we'll not be bothered by them on board here."

"'T would be better to sink them all."

"And what would you do with the people?"

"Let them have their own boats. They'd soon be picked up."

"Don't be indacent! The mother that bore you would be ashamed of you, Domenick. But never you fear! If 't is your skill as a gunner you 're thinking of, I'll give you some pretty targets yet."

During the night another steamer was sighted, but as she showed the signals of the North German Lloyd, the *Grampania* replied with those of the Cunard line, and allowed her to pass unmolested as a neutral.

The following day was spent, with the engines dead slow, in examining the stores and storing away the ammunition that had been brought on board from the *Rosario*. Four stewards belonging to the former crew were found secreted in the steerage, and before he let it be known that he had discovered them O'Grady took them with him, and quietly set them to work in emptying overboard all the spirits he could find. He knew that with such a crew as he had there was no greater danger than that which would come if they had access to drink. In their presence he had ceased to be the easy-going, jovial commander: he was sharp and exacting, though it was still his magnetism which controlled them.

Late in the day a Guion steamer, apparently the *Alaska*, was reported, bound west, but as soon as she sighted the *Grampania* she went about in an extraordinary fashion, as if alarmed, and was lost in the darkness of the night.

"What does that mean?" said Quinn.

"'T is plain enough. The *Rosario* must have spoken her and warned her, bad luck to her! Once the old ship gets to Queenstown and tells the story, not another one of them will venture out. But there's plenty to do in the mean time. The *Gigantic* will be along here presently, and to-morrow we may fall in with the *Cistercia*."

The latter was the *Grampania's*

sister, and no bigger prize could be expected.

O'Grady's prediction was verified early the next day. The *Grampania* was headed eastward, and proceeding at a speed of not more than five knots, when a ball of smoke was discovered floating up over the rim of the western horizon. It swelled in volume until it made a great brown blot that seemed to fill all the space between the sea and the sky, and it rolled nearer and nearer to the *Grampania*, as if driven by a hurricane. So copious was it that the ship making it was almost invisible until she was within five miles of O'Grady's vessel. Then the two light, sparless poles and the two enormous red funnels, counterparts of those of the *Gram-*

pania, showed that she was indeed the peerless sister of that vessel. It was clear that the relationship was mutually recognized, for the *Cistercia* was seen to alter her course to bring herself as near as possible to her sister ship. As O'Grady knew, only one inference could be entertained by those on board her, — that the *Grampania* had broken down, and was returning to Queenstown, with the *Bulgaria* attempting to assist her. She came up astern rapidly, and then slowed down until she was close abeam. A string of bunting, bright as a flock of pigeons in the sun, fluttered up her halyards. "What is the matter? Do you need assistance?"

"No, but you do," O'Grady said

to himself, with a chuckle, as he ordered the answer: "Both engines disabled; stand by us; send the captain on board."

A boat from the *Cistercia* was soon alongside, and the captain of that ship cautiously pulled himself up the ladder.

The moment he reached the deck he saw at a glance that something was wrong, — something not related to the engines, whatever their condition might be. Where was his old friend Gallup? The deck was dirty and disordered, and no uniformed officers or neat-looking seamen were in sight. What had become of the passengers? He sprang for the rail — he is still an active man — and attempted to regain the ladder, but three or four

men pressed upon him and shoved him down one of the companion-ways. A cloth was bound over his mouth and a cord knotted around his wrists.

Hearing the struggle, the men in the boat attempted to shove off, but they were instantly covered by a dozen revolvers.

"Come aboard here, every mother's son of you, or you 'll never feel a deck under your ugly feet again!" roared Quinn.

They hauled the boat up to the ladder, obeying with alacrity, and were driven forward under the cover of the same revolvers.

The *Cistercia* was so near that all that happened could be plainly seen from her bridge through a glass, and though the chief officer

lost his presence of mind for a moment, he recovered it enough to see that it would be wise to put a greater distance between his ship and the other, though he had no thought of abandoning his commander. He started the engines again, and O'Grady, seeing this, supposed that it was an attempt to escape. He at once ordered his own engines "Ahead—full speed!"

No reply came from the engine-room, and he repeated the order, and looked astern for the froth of the screws. The ship continued at a standstill, while the *Cistercia* was rapidly drawing away.

"We'll lose her! We'll lose her!" he cried, as he telegraphed for a third time.

An engineer came running up

the ladder to the shade-deck and thence to the bridge. The engines would not move. What had been a fiction was now a fact; the *Grampania* was disabled, — how and to what extent had not yet been discovered. O'Grady looked ruefully after the *Cistercia.*

"If she knew now she 'd be off like a bird," he moaned. "Ah, but she does not know it, and we 'll have her yet," he said, finding quick consolation after his own fashion.

The seven-inch gun on the port bow was already loaded, and he gave the order to fire. Quinn's aim was true. The shot went through one of the starboard boats and cut as with scissors one of the wire shrouds. The *Cistercia* took the hint, slowed down, and then, in

answer to the *Grampania's* signals, came back to her former position.

The captain was now released, and sent back to his ship under an armed guard, forty of O'Grady's men having preceded him and taken possession of her. A brisk fight had occurred before they were allowed to board her, but another shot had compelled her surrender.

"Lower your boats, and transfer yourselves to the *Bulgaria* as fast as you can."

These were O'Grady's orders to the captive commander.

"What do you mean to do, you villain?" he asked, helplessly and sullenly.

"Pay an old debt," was the only answer vouchsafed by O'Grady.

He hurried the transfer, and

before it was over the *Cistercia* had already begun to sink, the sea pouring into her through several open valves and ports. He then recalled his men both from her and the *Bulgaria*, and returned with them on board the *Grampania*.

The *Bulgaria*, now in possession of only her own crew and the crew and passengers of the *Cistercia*, seemed inclined to linger on the scene, like a creature stunned by misfortune; but O'Grady, emphasizing the message with another gun, signalled her to proceed on her course immediately, as he feared that if she delayed his own disabled condition would be discovered.

The wind began to howl and threaten a gale, and the sun went down casting red gleams through

banks of purplish-blue clouds. The *Bulgaria*, slowly steaming away, became but a mote in the eye, and the mote itself dissolved; the last feather in her trail of smoke was brushed away. The dark hull of the *Cistercia* was sagging under the flood that was pouring into her, and those who watched her wondered that she kept afloat so long. Before the daylight had quite gone they saw, or imagined they saw, a strange movement in her, like that of an animal shaking itself, and then, bow in the air, the noble ship, which less than a year ago had cost two million dollars, disappeared forever in the engulfing sea.

The accident to the engines had

not been serious, and five days later the *Grampania* was hove to in a fog on the Banks of Newfoundland. She had captured six of the newest and fastest ships on the ocean, representing a value of fully twelve hundred thousand pounds, including the *Gigantic*, which she had fallen in with on the morning following the sinking of the *Cistercia*. But now she had less than fifty tons of coal left, and her capacity for mischief was nearly gone. A small steamer, bound from Halifax to Trinidad, had been taken, and was kept close alongside. She was to be used as a consort and tender until the moment came when it would be necessary to abandon the *Grampania*, which was then to be

scuttled, while the crew were to retreat to the smaller vessel, and proceed in her to a South or Central American port, and there disperse.

All of O'Grady's calculations had so far been verified, and while his confidence in himself had increased, his crew had learned to regard him with superstitious awe. Whatever he predicted came to pass in a miraculous way, so that now when he expressed a belief that before the *Grampania* was abandoned they would capture still another White Star ship, his men looked upon it as being as good as done.

"The *Cosmic* ought to be here this afternoon," he said. "The only fear I have is that she may get by us in the fog."

He went on board the smaller ship — the *Bogota* — to superintend some changes that were being made in her, when the harsh ear-splitting whistle of a large steamer pierced the air.

"What did I tell you?" he said, exultantly. "I 'm not infallible, like the Pope, but take my word for it, that 's the *Cosmic*."

He had left orders that the sound of any whistle was to be answered with continuous blasts by the *Grampania*, to convey the idea that she was in distress, and to draw the prey on; and that ship now gave vent to a barbarous dissonance which reached far over the waters. The answering blasts were loud and frequent, and rapidly grew nearer and more powerful.

"She must be close aboard!" O'Grady cried, excitedly. "Give way there, boys, or it will be too late."

He was attempting to rejoin the *Grampania;* but before he was half-way towards her the other ship unburied herself out of the white silky fog. He stood up in the stern-sheets and let the tiller-ropes fall from his hands. He looked for two cream-colored funnels, and saw four; for a black hull, and saw a white one. He had caught a Tartar. The new-comer was not the *Cosmic*, but the cruiser *Columbia*, which, not deceived this time, as by the *Blake*, had fulfilled her mission.

The *Grampania* attempted to steam away, but was brought to by three shots, which followed one an-

other so peremptorily that the crew saw that resistance was hopeless. They then attempted to escape in boats, but, panic-stricken as they were, they could not lower them before a boarding party from the cruiser had taken possession.

Meanwhile, however, O'Grady had rowed back to the *Bogota*, and putting on all steam, had vanished in the fog. The *Columbia* did not follow him, but after securing all the prisoners in the steerage, she took the Cunarder in tow, and in three days arrived with her off Fire Island.

Even his intimate friends profess to believe that O'Grady never reached land, but went down in the *Bogota*. This may be so, for

that vessel is on the underwriters' books as "missing"; but there is an officer of the new Brazilian navy who looks very much like him, and who was promoted not long ago for an exploit of extraordinary daring. His name is Castilian, but the brogue in his speech leads the listener to infer that he was educated abroad. As two and two make twenty-two as well as four, combinations of that kind have a degree of uncertainty; but one may draw one's own inferences from the fact that the wife of this officer was formerly Miss Maggie Burke of New York.

THE END.

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